

*"One of America's Finest Small Market Radio Broadcasting Companies"*

## The Heartland Christmas Story

There is a tale or two of "Christmas Magic" in almost everyone's life. The wonderment of Christmas is evident just about everywhere you look in the Wisconsin Northwoods. The snow-flocked Christmas trees adorn the countryside ... the clear Northern skies filled with twinkling Christmas stars overhead... the moon reflecting from the ice-covered lakes lighting up the hillsides... Yes, there is Christmas Magic in The Northwoods.

When Heartland CEO Jim Coursolle asked his fellow employees to share their most memorable Christmas moments and traditions, he wasn't sure what would happen. "I was hoping people would help me write what I thought might be one of the most fun Christmas stories that anyone could ever read," he said. "The response from everyone was overwhelming, I could hardly wait to put all the stories together and write "The Heartland Christmas Story!"

We begin to share memorable moments with a picturesque tale from Sandy and Marge Berg, long-time successful salespeople from the Ashland stations: "Our most memorable Christmas ever was a time we spent it at our cabin one year. We usually shut the cabin down for the winter, but decided to spend Christmas there that year. Our daughter Jean Ann brought Sandy's Mom to the cabin after church on Christmas Eve to spend the Christmas season with us. When they drove up and saw the cottage lit up and with all the fresh white snow, they said it looked like a Thomas Kinkaid picture. When Sandy's Mom walked in the house, she said it was the best Christmas she ever had! She is not with us any longer and we always think of that special Christmas we all had together."

**Kathy Wawiorka, Heartland Corporate Business Manager told us:**

"Every year my husband dresses up as Santa for the Vilas County Humane Society to take pictures with our furry friends as a fundraiser. This year's photo shoot was held at Milestone Senior Living. Santa snuck in and surprised the residents by joining in on their



*Kathy's husband Bubba and his buddy.*

exercise time. Later, anyone who wanted pictures with Santa had the opportunity to sit on his lap (or in their wheelchairs) and tell him their Christmas wishes. You should have seen the smiles. They all became kids again. As I wiped tears from my eyes, I was reminded of my parents in their twilight years."



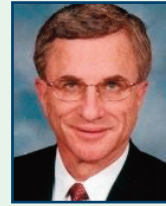
*Starr's gumdrop Tree.*

**Starr Helgemo, the Office Manager in Iron River, told of her family's Christmas tradition:** "Every year, we haul out our Gumdrop tree and the kids love to put the gum-drops on to decorate it! We did it when I was a little girl, and it was one of my favorite things about Christmas; and, of course, the count-down on the Advent calendar too!"

**Wendy Shulta, a successful salesperson from Eagle River will put a smile on your face:** "The most memorable thing I remember is when we woke up to the sound of a truck we got our son when he was 2 yrs old. He had crawled over his gate opened some of the gifts and cut up my throw pillows. Because my husband and I opened our gifts the night before and left the scissors out."

**Up in Corporate Traffic, Deb Hytry shared this one:** "For my family, bigger is better, so for the last 5 years we have cut our own tree in the woods. The first weekend AFTER gun season ends, we get out the blaze orange clothes (as we don't hunt, these clothes are only for "tree hunting") and jump in the truck to find the 'perfect' tree. After tromping around the woods, we find a 'whopper' to be our tree.

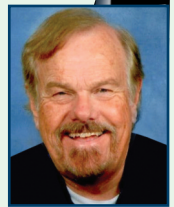
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**Jim Coursolle**  
President, CEO



**Scott Jaeger**  
Ashland  
VP and General  
Manager



**Craig Whetstone**  
Eagle River  
VP and General  
Manger



**Darla Isham**  
Park Falls  
VP and General  
Manager



**Dan Wheeler**  
Iron River  
VP and General  
Manager



**Mike Wolf**  
Corporate  
Program Director



**Skip Hunter**  
Ashland  
Program Director



**Joel Karnick**  
Park Falls  
Program Director



**Brad Zima**  
Iron River  
Program Director

# Merry Christmas

**Christmas, from Page 1**

Our daughter then cuts it down and my husband & she haul it out of the woods – while I take pictures of this mega ‘yooper’ event set in blaze orange. The struggle to get it in the house does not qualify as a Norman Rockwell moment of family harmony, but once the dust settles & its anchored to the floor & wall, it definitely makes a cherished memory. We have established our “max” tree of 16 feet (to clear the ceiling fan) and for the last four years it’s not an inch less than that. Let the decorating insanity begin...”



*Deb Hytry's GIANT tree.*

**L**et's test your memory. **Nancy Johnson, Office Manager at Park Falls** will show you how: “When I was a girl and got my first bike, I named it...Myrtle, Murgatroid, Caviltafish, Ate-a-car Mostilolly Movintosh. (I can rattle that off til this day.) Darla gave me an animated Christmas dog that sings “There’s No Place Like Home for the Holidays”. She presented it to me during “Reality Radio”. We ran a contest to name the dog. 14 names came in and I chose one. Darla said NOOOO, I should name it all the names like I did with my bike. The next week they tested me...from memory I rattled off... Oofda-Woofda, Harvey, Poopsy, Jingles, Jingles, Buster, Sergeant Walker, Bowzer, Lucky, Sven, Woof-Woof, Barkley, Bernie, Josh. 14 names and I got thru it Live on air. OK, your turn!



*Lynn and Kevin's Northwoods Tree.*

The Heartland Christmas Story wouldn't be complete without Lynn Weiland, Heartland's

Corporate Traffic Director and a part of the Eagle River stations for over 20 years. “Christmas is always the favorite time of year for me. All my past Christmases have been so very special with tons of memories. But this year, I also start a new page in my book with new memories to be made with a new person in my life, Kevin. Thus starts the 1st tree to be put up. I brought down to Rudolph, WI – nice, huh – my favorite red window bulbs to be enjoyed. We picked out a tree in the frigid cold. I left to shop and soon I got a call stating he remembers why he hated Christmas. He wanted to surprise me and have the tree up at least by the time I returned. But, the tree fell over, hitting my red bulbs and smashing one to pieces. I wanted to surprise you he told me. I had to laugh, stating it's only a bulb which was easily replaced. Now, he tells me that he enjoys our beautiful tree and thus, Christmas isn't so bad after all.”

**One of Heartland's top DJ's Dave “Q-Ball” Nelson talks about when he was in the Air Force:** “It was Decem-

ber 1988 when I was stationed with the Air Force at Galena Airport. Our mission there was to keep the Russians from entering U.S. Airspace. My tour of duty was one year; December would have been my 6 month there. I was supposed to go home for Christmas on December 20th,



*Q-Ball in the mornings on WNXR.*

I figured that would be enough time to get back home to Marquette, MI, where my wife and kids were living. I purchased the ticket, but did not have a boarding pass. When I arrived in Anchorage for my flight to Chicago there was no seat left on the plane. Since I had no boarding pass, I was not able to board. Next flight out with seats available would have been on December 23rd. I told one of the flight attendants that I have to get home, I have limited time to spend with my family for Christmas and I did not want to live in the airport. That flight attendant was not able to help me. Then I told another flight attendant that I was in the Air Force and could you help me. Well that was not a problem. He went on the plane, talked to one individual explaining my situation, and the guy gave up his seat so I could get home in time for Christmas. My faith in humanity was restored.”

**Anyone who knows WBA award-winning ‘DJ Rick’ Frishmann, from Park Falls, knows fun!** DJ Rick told

the HCGazette, “This one was actually told to me by my Dad a few years ago. He said that after my Mom told me there was no Santa, my immediate response was ‘We drove to the mall every year for nothing! What a waste of gas! I don't think I was happy to know that all the fantasy's of this big, fat guy sliding down our chimney with all those wonderful presents, was a BIG HOAX!!!! Christmas is indeed for kids...”



*DJ Rick sitting on Santa's lap.*

**Trish Keeley, Eagle River's top salesperson, has a Christmas tale:** “We

have always opened gifts with my family on Christmas Eve. When I was little, we were supposed to be asleep so Santa would come. We would go in the bedroom so Santa thought we were asleep, then my Mom would ring bells and make noise and stomp around so I thought Santa was there. Then we would run out and open the presents. There was a water tower near our house with a flashing red light on the top of it and I always thought it was Rudolph's nose. We still do this every year with all the little ones when the whole family gets together on Christmas Eve.”



*Trish Keeley's beautiful granddaughter.*

**Preston Vaughn, our veteran salesperson in Park Falls, tells a wonderful Christmas story:** “It was Christmas

Eve 1968; Apollo 8 was in orbit around the moon. I couldn't believe that we accomplished this. It was a moment that rivaled even the attack of presents surrounding our Christmas tree. Descriptions of men actually traveling all the way from the moon to my living room television set.

# Merry Christmas

**Christmas, from Page 2**

Silently, I wondered, Could there ever be a more memorable moment than this. The answer to that unspoken question soon followed. Even as a 19 year old, I would look up in the starry sky and be awed. It was so vast, so beautiful. How did it get there? I wondered, is there more to what I see than meets my eye?

God created the heavens and the earth, that's it! There is a meaning and a purpose to all the expanse of the heavens; there is more than meets the eye. For in that moment, a young adult, hearing the words of the Book of Genesis from lunar orbit, came to an understanding that has painted the canvas of his life ever since. Yes, there must be a God."

**Another top Ashland DJ, Mark Dixon, shares a warm story of Christmas kindness:** "Beginning

with Christmas of 1990, I would fly my Mom out to San Diego every year to stay two weeks with her sister, Ann. This gave her a chance to get out of the bitter cold and into a warmer climate, as she was well into her seventies. Christmas 2004, I decided to give myself something that would create a lasting memory for both of us. I flew MYSELF out to San Diego to see HER, as Ann had invited her to move in with her by that time because she could not endure the cold of the Midwest winters any longer.



*Mark Dixon's Mom.*

I told absolutely NOBODY in the family, because I knew that somehow the surprise would get out. So, I took a taxi from Lindbergh Airport to their home in Lakeside. I waited on their porch for an hour when a car my cousin was driving pulled up in the driveway. I didn't see the actual look on her face at the time, but my aunt told me she said "that looks like Mark!" - that memory will last me the rest of my life."

**The Office Manager in Eagle River, 'always very happy' Jenny Gabrelcik, has a story that will make you hungry:** "My family tradition is not so unique, but it is the most important part of every Christmas I can remember: the food! Every Christmas morn-

ing my mom cooks her egg bake with blueberry muffins and then for dinner we go to my Grandma's where we feast on ham, mashed potatoes, rolls, and almost any other Christmas food you can imagine! Now since I've moved to Wisconsin from Minnesota, where my family lives, I will have to learn how to do all the Christmas cooking soon!"

**Paul Dischler, successful salesperson in Park Falls, just received, along with his wife, an amazing Christmas gift of a new son in November. He's excited to relate:**

"My most memorable Christmas moments have always been at church. I have always been drawn to faith-based Christmas music and I have been blessed over the years to sing in various church choirs or perform solos and duets. Christmas music is special to me and I love being able to share the beauty of it with those I love."

**The top number two or three salesperson in Heartland is Amber Sarafiny:**

Amber is one of those special people who affect everyone they know. She tells her story, "Christmas has drastically changed for my family and me (as has every day of the year), but my greatest memories of the holiday will always be just having all my kids together. The very last "normal" Christmas was in 2011. I don't know what I would have done differently if I had known that it would be Adrianna's last Christmas. I remember it being a happy one for all of us. I will hold on to the memories of my Christmas's with ALL my children together and look forward to Christmas with my living children and future grandchildren knowing that Adrianna will always be with us in spirit."

**Smiling at the front desk of the Heartland Ashland cluster is Lori Mahnke:**

Lori has one of the biggest smiles ever, so she's happy to write this Christmas story, "It was December 1990, my husband and I decided to surprise both our families that we were expecting another baby by announcing the news in a Christmas Card! You can imagine how surprised they all were, and since we lived in Phillips, WI at the time, we were able to keep it a secret from even our siblings. Nine months later, we had our second daughter, Stephanie, who as you read this, is now 22 and will graduate in December from Coe College, IA."



*Lori Mahnke's Daughters Stephanie and Sarah.*

**Craig Whetstone, longtime broadcaster and new General Manager in Eagle River remembered:** "When we lived in Montana, every Christmas we would drive into the Tobacco Root mountains and build a bonfire. We would do this with friends and their families. We'd clear out snow in order to have a place for the fire, find firewood and build a huge fire. We'd also sled in the mountains and, if the snow wasn't too deep, do some hiking. Being outdoors is a great way to celebrate Christmas." Amen!



*Deb Josephs' Precious Moments.*

**Heartland CFO, Deb Josephs, told the HCGazette:** "Santa still comes to my Mom's house every year and fills a stocking for my sister and me. We get similar items so we always open similar shaped packages at the same time. The highlight is the Precious Moments Christmas edition ornament. We are in our 40s and 50s and still believe in Santa!"

**Bob Michaels who loves selling advertising for the Ashland stations said:** "When asked about a favorite Christmas memory, I always look back to one incident from my childhood. I was fourteen and my folks, sister and I spent Christmas at my Aunt Gert's and Uncle George's home. My mother's entire side of the family was there; some 25 to 30 people. There was great food, warmth of family and, my Grandmother's favorite, the completely festive family card game. That's right, while other families sang around Christmas trees, my father, uncles and especially grandma, played poker. The change purses, and sometimes wallets, opened up to accommodate the penny ante stakes. Every person at the table had their beverage of choice, a pile of change and the freshly dealt hand just given to them. One uncle had to leave early. Grandma asked if I wanted to sit in. 'WOULD I !!!, of course,' I said. This was a GREAT honor to be invited to join in with the adults. Why not, I'm close to being an adult. The problem was that I then began to win virtually every hand, seriously winning close to \$100 dollars playing pennies, nickels and dimes.

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# Merry Christmas

## Christmas, from Page 3

One uncle made it his objective to keep playing me on doubling pots and I won them all. After forty years this card game is still discussed by my cousins as the last day that cards were played on Christmas!"

**T**he voice of "The Heartland Radio Network" and also the Wisconsin "stringer" for CBS Radio, Bruce Marcus tells us: "I used to spend the weekend before Christmas with my grandparents eating traditional Jewish food and going to Temple for services. We would then exchange gifts for Hanukkah." Happy Hanukkah Bruce!



Brad Zima pickin' and grinnin'.

**B**rad Zima is the Program Director of Heartland's Iron River stations: Outside of being a "scratch golfer" and an excellent hunter and fisherman, Brad loves to talk music, "Some years ago, my Dad got me one of the best Christmas presents I have ever received, a Martin guitar. At the time, I had a bunch of guitars and equipment, but this one was different. It was a very meaningful gift, and one that I will always treasure. Since then, I have gone on 'hiatus' from playing live music, and have sold all of my guitars and equipment.... except my Martin acoustic. When I need a release from the "realities" of life, I pick it up and the troubles melt away. Cheers, friends!"

**T**he bright cheery morning sound in Eagle River is air personality Amy Linette: "I remember one Christmas when I was younger and got a bike from Santa. I got up on Christmas morning and started digging in my stocking where, along with the oranges, candies and other trinkets, there was a note from the big guy himself telling me that I had been a very good girl and that I had a present waiting in the garage for me. As excited as I was to get the bicycle, the thing that struck me the most about that note was that it was my Dad's handwriting so I learned in that moment that Santa didn't really exist. That is one memory of Christmas that I never forgot so once I had my own daughter, even

before she was old enough to know the difference, I would always take the gift tags to work and have my co-workers sign them from 'Santa' so she could enjoy the fantasy as long as possible."



The Coursolles, Gramma and Grandpa and cousins pose for a famous 'spoon picture.'

**H**earthland's CEO, Jim Coursolle said he loves to reminisce back to a much earlier Christmastime: "I have some recollection of a Christmas when I was about five or six years old. Santa brought me a 78 rpm album containing a story about "Sparky The Talking Train." I couldn't tell you much about it and here's why: That Christmas morning, I got up early with my sisters Judy and Jeannie, and went downstairs to see if Santa had come. There was a ton of stuff around the tree, including the record album. I was jumping around with excitement and I jumped right on the record set. Anyone familiar with 78 rpm records knows they were pretty fragile. "Sparky" never made it to the old RCA phonograph.

Some of my favorite Christmases are those that Diane, Wendy and Heidi and I spent at Diane's parents home in a small town near Rochester, MN. At the time, we were operating a radio station in Northern MN about four hours away. Many Christmases, we drove through some challenging winter weather to join Gramma and Grandpa and all of the cousins for Christmas. The thoughts of the family warmth and excitement still brings a BIG smile to my face. The Christmas Mass at the little church in MN was so warm and quaint. My in-laws were so wonderful and the chili and Christmas cookies Gramma made, were the best!"

**I**n Park Falls, Darla Isham is the General Manager. She remembers when: "My husband Gary volunteered to be Santa Claus for one of my clients (a radio schedule with Santa included)! Of course, young daughter Maggy arrived with her Christmas list, and as she was sitting on Santa's lap, she looks up at Santa and says "You sure look like my Daddy Santa" Santa just laughed a hearty "Ho Ho Ho" and looked

up at me for support; all I could think of saying at that moment was "Oh, how nice of you to say that Sweetie." Then Santa took the cue and asked her



Santa, Darla and Maggy Isham.

what she wanted for Christmas. Last Christmas as we were looking through family photos, that picture was found and everyone got the best laugh out of that one. Maggy, now 18 years old, says "See I know my Daddy!" Today, our family traditions consist of a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service followed by driving down every street in Park Falls looking at the beautiful Christmas lights. On Christmas Day, everyone shows up for a feast, opening of the gifts and playing board games by a toasty fireplace.

**A**shland, Heartland's leading market, is lead by GM Scott Jaeger: He says, "My Christmas story and gift is a

simple one; I met Kim, my wife, 15 years ago. The one thing she thoroughly enjoys about Christmas is attending Christmas Eve services. It's not just the service; it's where. There is a small, adorable



Scotts Little Church.

church out in the township of Ironwood called St John's Lutheran. It's very tiny, but incredibly decorated for the Christmas season. When you drive up, they have lighted Ice Candles lining the sidewalk as you enter, and they just glisten in the darkness. That really sets the mood for a nice Christmas Eve. Inside, The Christmas Tree is trimmed immaculately! Sometimes there may be only 40 people there, but it's the intimacy of that service that we really love! On Christmas Day, it's off to my Italian family...what can I say?...did you ever see the movie "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"? Food everywhere. But isn't that what Christmas is all about?"

# Merry Christmas

**Christmas,** from Page 4



*Mike and Wendi's Horses.*

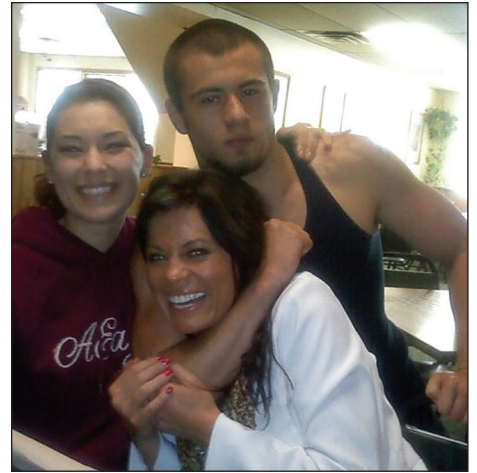
**I**n Eagle River and Corporately, Mike Wolf directs excellent Heartland programming: Mike and his wife Wendi have horses. His Christmas story speaks of a legend, "As all creation will one day acknowledge Christ as King, we have a shadow of it on Christmas, when the animals kneel to the new born king.

The story goes that when Christ was born and Mary, his mother laid him in the manger, the animals knelt before him and praised him. And, so the animals at midnight, on Christmas Eve, still kneel or bow their heads, or stretch their wings, and say in voice, "Christ the King." So, at 10 minutes to midnight every Christmas Eve, I venture out to our horse pasture and wait, with treats in hand. Let's just say the past 6 years have been very quiet. I think that I have a better chance at seeing Sasquatch than hearing the horses talk, but, I will keep trying." Maybe they gently whisper Mike?

**"T**he most memorable Christmas would have to be the last Christmas," says Rob Zimble, one of the top Eagle River salespeople. Every Christmas is special. For me and my family, Christmas is a month-long thing. We have a Christmas pickle ornament that we hide in the Christmas tree and the kids have to find it. Last year we attended 7 family Christmas Parties throughout the month."

**W**hen people in Park Falls and Phillips get up in the morning, the voice they hear is Park Falls Program Director Joel Karnick: "We had 4 brothers in our family, so we always had fun "looking" for hidden Christmas presents before Christmas Day. One year, we found one of our presents,...the game of LIFE.....my brother and I played an entire game, re-packaged the game, then acted surprise (with a smirk) on Christmas morning when we re-opened the gift."

**T**ammy Upson, who is a successful Park Falls salesperson and CMA on-air talent award winner says: "I've come to the conclusion that 2013 is the best Christmas thus far. As a single parent, I've struggled to provide gifts for my children. It's been a big year for us. My daughter, Victoria, married the man of her dreams this summer. She claims, 'I've never been happier in my whole life.' My son, Levi, graduated from high school, enlisted in the Navy, completed boot camp and is currently learning to design Aviation Navigational Systems in Pensacola, Florida. God has blessed them and they are reaping seeds of dedication. I get to pick Levi up at midnight December 21 for his first visit home in six months. Yes, this is THE year!...oh and I'm getting married December 28th!" Tammy, we at Heartland think you are the "gift."



*Victoria, Tammy and Levi.*

**J**ohn Warren of Ashland has been the leading Heartland salesperson for years and so the HCGazette asked John to write the last word: John wrote a poem:

*"It's the night before Christmas  
and all through the Warren's  
house.*

*Not a person is quiet, we'll have  
a full house.*

*The jokes are flying left and  
right... Some pretty funny and  
some not so bright.*

*We eat and we drink like never  
before 'til the very last one finds  
the door.*

*Then on Christmas Day away  
we go... to make all the rounds  
through the Cold and the Snow.*

*The kids and grand kids with  
eyes wide open... They can't wait  
for Grandma and Grandpa to ar-  
rive, they have gifts to Open..*

*And then it starts all over... with  
more food and drinks again..."*

*Have a Merry Christmas from  
everyone at Heartland. Peace on  
earth and good will toward men!*

